Overview

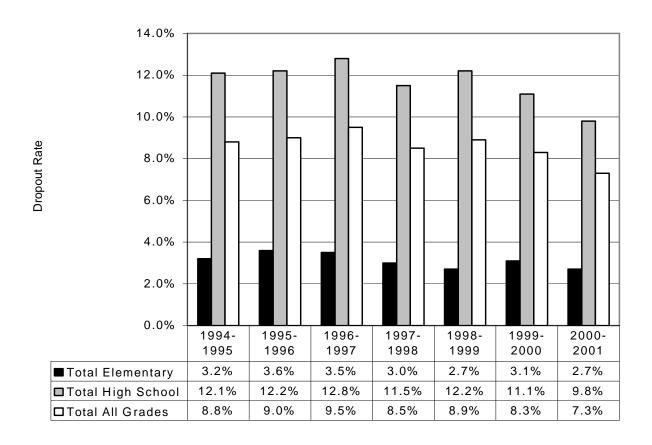
According to information reported by local school districts and charter schools, the total statewide student enrollment for the 2000-2001 academic year was 451,360 students in grades 7 through 12, including students in ungraded high school classes. Of those students, 33,055 dropped out of school by the end of the academic year, resulting in a statewide dropout rate of 7.3 percent. These data represent an increase of 24% (85,659) in reported enrollment in grades 7 through 12 from the 1999-2000 academic year and a simultaneous 1% decrease in the statewide dropout rate. The greatest decrease in the dropout rate is in grades 9 through 12, 9.8% in 2001, down 1.3% from 2000 and 2.4% from 1999. While still high, this represents a continuing downward trend and is the first time, since the report has been available, that the Arizona high school dropout rate has been below 10%.

Statewide dropout rates by grade levels for academic years 1994-95 through 2000-2001 are shown in **Table 1** and **Chart 1**.

Table 1
Arizona Dropout Trends by Grade: 1995-2001

Grade/Category	1994-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001
7	3.0%	3.5%	3.6%	2.9%	2.6%	3.0%	2.6%
8	3.5%	3.6%	3.4%	3.1%	2.8%	3.2%	2.7%
Total Elementary	3.2%	3.6%	3.5%	3.0%	2.7%	3.1%	2.7%
9	12.0%	13.6%	13.5%	11.2%	11.2%	9.7%	9.2%
10	11.9%	12.4%	12.0%	11.8%	11.7%	10.7%	8.6%
11	12.0%	11.8%	11.2%	11.4%	11.3%	10.9%	9.3%
12	12.6%	10.1%	10.9%	10.8%	11.1%	10.7%	9.5%
Ungraded Secondary	10.3%	15.5%	35.2%	16.6%	28.9%	29.7%	28.8%
Total High School	12.1%	12.2%	12.8%	11.5%	12.2%	11.1%	9.8%
Total All Grades	8.8%	9.0%	9.5	8.5%	8.9%	8.3%	7.3%

Chart 1 Arizona Dropout Trends by Grade: 1995-2001



INTRODUCTION

The annual calculation of dropout rates in the State of Arizona results from a cooperative effort between local school districts and charter schools, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE), the Arizona State Legislature, and the United States Department of Education (USDOE). Presently, the emphasis on education reform and school accountability mandates greater attention to performance measures, such as the dropout rate, which serves as a key indicator of a school's success in maintaining its student population. Beginning in the fall of 2002, Arizona's school accountability system will label schools based on a set of performance measures, including the dropout rate.

Dropout Data: Arizona's Reporting Requirement and Reporting Period

All Arizona public school districts and charter schools teaching students in grades 7 through 12 are required to submit dropout data annually. The dropout rate study measures the proportion of students who drop out of school during a twelve-month period, which begins the first day of summer recess and ends the last day of school. Dropout data collected in Arizona do not meet current federal dropout data definitions and guidelines used by the USDOE. Thus, Arizona statistics *are not comparable* to dropout statistics from other states using the USDOE standards.³

Definitions⁴

Enrollment is defined as the total count of students who were enrolled on the first day of summer recess, or at any time during the following school year, and used as the population figure against which dropouts are subsequently counted. Moreover, it is seen as a roster that changes continually (even during the summer months) as students enroll, transfer to other schools, dropout, or graduate. Schools are responsible for monitoring and reporting their enrollment from the end of the prior school year to the last day of the reported school year. Students who are promoted from elementary feeder schools become the reporting responsibility of the schools in which they are expected to enroll.

An unduplicated enrollment count is used to calculate dropout rates more precisely at different levels of analysis. For example, a student who attends High School A in District X has the potential to be a dropout from that school and is counted as one student served at High School A. If that student transfers midyear to High School B, within the same district, the student now gains the potential of being counted as a dropout at that school and is counted as a student served at High School B. However, at the district level, the student should count as only one student served by District X in calculating the district dropout rate. The means of ensuring an unduplicated student count at each level have been built into the enrollment codes used by schools and districts statewide.

Ungraded secondary includes students who are assigned to classes or programs without a standard grade designation.

³ See Appendix A for a discussion of why Arizona's dropout rate is not comparable to the USDOE definition and definitions used by other states.

⁴ See Appendix D for descriptions of code and formulae used in this report.

Dropouts are defined as students who were enrolled in school at any time during the school year but were not enrolled at the end of the school year and did not transfer, graduate, or die.

Summer dropouts are defined as students who were enrolled at the end of the prior school year but failed to enroll at the beginning of the following school year and did not transfer, graduate, or die. These students are counted as summer dropouts from the grades in which they were *expected* to enroll.

Withdrawal type represents the unique withdrawal classifications used by school districts and charter schools to provide insight into some of the conditions associated with student dropouts. These specific codes differentiate the known dropouts (i.e., students who deliberately drop out of school, are expelled and fail to return, or leave school due to illness) from the students whose status is unknown. It is important to distinguish between known dropouts and students whose status is unknown because each situation has a different policy implication necessary to reduce the dropout rate.

Dropout rate is defined as the ratio of dropouts to the total enrollment, expressed as a percentage. The number of dropouts in any particular district, grade, gender, or racial/ethnic category is compared to the total enrollment in the same subgroup.

Status unknown rate is defined as the ratio of status unknown students to the total enrollment, expressed as a percentage. A student is coded as status unknown by a school district after accruing 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences or when the student's status or location is unknown to the district. Students whose status is status unknown are a subset of the dropout population: each student whose status is unknown is considered a dropout, while not all dropouts are coded as status unknown.

Please note that, in the case of union high school districts, students whose status is unknown for their entire ninth-grade school year are excluded from analyses (i.e. enrollment, dropout, and status unknown rates). This adjustment is made because such students are regarded as never having attended the district in question. Statewide, a total of 548 students fell into this subset for academic year 2000-2001.

Applying the Dropout Definition

In general, a student is not counted as a dropout if there is documented evidence of transfer to another school. Some examples of applying the dropout definition to determine a student's status are given below.

The following students are **not** counted as dropouts:

- Students who leave school but return before the end of the same school year
- ◆ Students who are remanded to the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC)
- Students who transfer to home-taught programs approved by county superintendents

- Students enrolled in alternative education programs, if the programs are either administered by the school district or approved by the district as full-time secondary education programs
- ♦ Students who do not return to school because they completed graduation requirements during the summer or at mid-year
- ♦ Students who enter early college admissions programs before graduating from high school, if they are enrolled full-time in programs leading to a postsecondary degree
- ♦ Students who leave school at age 22 and/or receive a completion credential, such as a certificate of attendance

The following students *are* counted as dropouts:

- ♦ Students who leave school because they move out of the area and who are not known to be enrolled in other schools, i.e., status unknown students
- ♦ Students transferring to adult education programs in schools with courses of study not meeting standard graduation requirements (e.g., GED preparatory classes, vocational certificate programs, technical schools), regardless of whether they earn their GED certificates
- ♦ Students who leave school and take correspondence courses, unless they earn and transfer sufficient course credits to satisfy the graduation requirements of the schools in which they are enrolled before the end of the same school year

Transfer Documentation

School records must indicate the withdrawal status of each student who leaves the school. Documentation of a student transfer to another school consists of either (1) a request from another school for a transfer of the student's records or (2) information from a responsible adult that the student is enrolled elsewhere.

Withdrawal codes used for students may change throughout the year as additional information becomes available. For example, a student whose status is unknown at the time of withdrawal is assigned a particular withdrawal code, but if a request is later received from another school for the student's records, the withdrawal code then would be changed to indicate a transfer to another school. The withdrawal status stated for students on each school's Year-End Enrollment Report reflects current knowledge at the time the report was filed.

ANALYSIS

Year-End Enrollment reports are required by each Arizona school district or charter school that teaches students in grades 7 through 12 or in ungraded high school classes⁵. Throughout this report, the reader should note whether the population in each analysis refers to a

⁵ The reader should note that, for schools that enrolled students last year but are not listed in Table 10 or 11, no data was submitted by the district and/or charter school.

single grade, the elementary grades (7 and 8), the high school grades (9 through 12 and ungraded secondary) or all grades (7 through 12 and ungraded secondary).

The enrollment count at each level represents an unduplicated count of every student enrolled for any length of time during the twelve-month reporting period. For example, a student who attended three different schools in the same district during a specific school year would be counted in enrollment at each school of attendance. However, that student would have been counted only once at the district, county and state levels. It is important to note that under Arizona law, school districts have up to five years in which to make necessary corrections or reviews to their enrollment data. Subsequently, school district and charter school data may not match the data reported herein.

RESULTS

Enrollment Count, Dropout Count, Dropout Rate, and Status Unknown Rate

The total student enrollment for academic year 2000-2001 was 451,360 students in grades 7 through 12, including students in ungraded high school classes. The total number of dropouts was 33,055, representing a statewide dropout rate of 7.3 percent.

Table 2 provides descriptive measures of dropout rates for individual grades and combined grades in the categories of elementary, high school, ungraded secondary, and all grades. Also provided are enrollment counts, dropout counts, dropout rates, and status unknown rates for individual and combined grades. The dropout rate was calculated by dividing the total number of students coded as dropouts by the total enrollment figure. The status unknown rate was calculated by dividing the total number of students coded as status unknown into the total enrollment figure.

Table 2 2000-2001 Enrollment Count, Dropout Count, Dropout Rate, and Status Unknown Rate by Grade

Grade/Category	Enrollment	Number of Dropouts	Dropout Rate	Status Unknown Rate
7	81526	2128	2.6%	2.2%
8	76114	2065	2.7%	2.2%
Total Elementary	157640	4193	2.7%	2.2%
9	86556	7962	9.2%	6.3%
10	75673	6539	8.6%	5.1%
11	62777	5848	9.3%	5.5%
12	58393	5538	9.5%	5.5%
Ungraded Secondary	10321	2975	28.8%	15.6%
Total High School	293720	28862	9.8%	6.0%
Total All Grades	451360	33055	7.3%	4.7%

Dropout Rates by Withdrawal Type

Table 3 shows the proportion of dropouts attributed to each type of withdrawal by grade. Each withdrawal type represents a specific classification through which school districts and charter schools provide insight into some of the conditions associated with student dropouts. Each classification is unique and requires a different course of action to reduce the dropout rate.

Table 3
2000-2001 Dropout Count and Rates by Grade and Withdrawal Type

G 1 (G)		0.4		0.4	Status	0.4		
Grade/Category	Illnesses	%	Expelled	%	Unknown	%	Dropout	%
7	45	2.1%	277	13.0%	1783	83.8%	18	0.8%
8	27	1.3%	318	15.4%	1657	80.2%	61	3.0%
Total Elementary	72	1.7%	595	14.2%	3440	82.0%	79	1.9%
9	94	1.2%	542	6.8%	5447	68.4%	1662	20.9%
10	73	1.1%	450	6.9%	3867	59.1%	1841	28.2%
11	82	1.4%	230	3.9%	3466	59.3%	1613	27.6%
12	62	1.1%	136	2.5%	3240	58.5%	1749	31.6%
Ungraded Secondary	53	1.8%	232	7.8%	1615	54.3%	952	32.0%
Total High School	364	1.3%	1590	5.5%	17635	61.1%	7817	27.1%
Total All Grades	436	1.3%	2185	6.6%	21075	63.8%	7896	23.9%

Table 3 (Cont'd)

Grade/Category	GED	%	Vocational School	%	Total
7	4	0.2%	1	0.0%	2128
8	2	0.1%	0	0.0%	2065
Total Elementary	6	0.1%	1	0.0%	4193
9	204	2.6%	13	0.2%	7962
10	290	4.4%	18	0.3%	6539
11	430	7.4%	27	0.5%	5848
12	343	6.2%	8	0.1%	5538
Ungraded Secondary	113	38.0%	10	0.3%	2975
Total High School	1380	4.8%	76	0.3%	28862
Total All Grades	1386	4.2%	77	0.2%	33055

The majority of all dropouts are students whose status is unknown, particularly in grades 7 and 8. It is likely that the dropout rate is overestimated by the imperfect method of tracking student mobility currently in place. Improvements in the tracking of students as they move from one

school to another, or from one district to another, will improve the accuracy of data and likely reduce the dropout rate.

The percent of dropouts who are expelled is more than twice as high in grades 7 and 8 than it is in grades 9-12. Further study into the reasons why there is such a high rate of expelled students in these grades is necessary.

Just under 5% of high school dropouts are students who have left high school to pursue a GED or attend a vocational school that does not offer a traditional Arizona high school diploma. This group of students has not abandoned school completely, but has chosen a non-traditional academic path. The response from schools and districts to this group of students is likely to be different from their response to students who leave and fail to pursue an academic path.

School-Year and Summer Dropouts

Dropout data submitted by schools must indicate whether students left during the school year or during the summer. The total numbers of school year dropouts, summer dropouts and the subsequent dropout rates are provided in **Table 4.**

Table 4
2000-2001 School-Year and Summer Dropouts
as a Percentage of Total Dropouts by Grade

Grade/Category	School Year Dropouts	%	Summer Dropouts	%	Total
7	1293	60.8%	835	39.2%	2128
8	1534	74.3%	531	25.7%	2065
Total Elementary	2827	67.4%	1366	32.6%	4193
9	6644	83.4%	1318	16.6%	7962
10	5706	87.3%	833	12.7%	6539
11	5006	85.6%	842	14.4%	5848
12	4646	83.9%	892	16.1%	5538
Ungraded Secondary	2881	96.8%	94	3.2%	2975
Total High School	24883	86.2%	3979	13.8%	28862
Total All Grades	27710	83.8%	5345	16.2%	33055

Dropout Rate by Gender and Grade

The enrollment count, dropout count, and dropout rate by gender and grade is provided in **Table 5.** The dropout rate for females and males was calculated by dividing the total number of dropouts into the total number of students enrolled.

For example, in the 2000-2001 academic year, there were 140,543 female students enrolled in Arizona's public high schools. Of that number, 12,210 high school females were coded as dropouts by local school districts. The total number of female dropouts was then divided into the total female enrollment, resulting in an 8.7% dropout rate for female high school students.

Table 5
2000-2001 Enrollment Count, Dropout Count, and
Dropout Rate by Gender and Grade

Grade/Category	Total Female Enrollment	Female Drops	Female Dropout Rate	Total Male Enrollment	Male Drops	Male Dropout Rate
7	39713	988	2.5%	41813	1140	2.7%
8	37038	941	2.5%	39076	1124	2.9%
Total Elementary	76751	1929	2.5%	80889	2264	2.8%
9	41626	3509	8.4%	44930	4453	9.9%
10	36553	2826	7.7%	39120	3713	9.5%
11	31041	2607	8.4%	31736	3241	10.2%
12	28297	2262	8.0%	30096	3276	10.9%
Ungraded Secondary	3026	1006	33.2%	7295	1969	27.0%
Total High School	140543	12210	8.7%	153177	16652	10.9%
Total All Grades	217294	14139	6.5%	234066	18916	8.1%

Dropout rates are decreasing for both males and females; however, male students continue to drop out at higher rates than female students. Compared to the 1999-2000 school year, the male dropout rate fell from 9.3% to 8.1%, a drop of 1.2%. This drop is greater than that of females, whose rate dropped from 7.2% to 6.5%, a drop of 0.7%.

Dropout Rate by Race/Ethnicity and Grade

The enrollment count, dropout count, and dropout rate are each shown by race/ethnicity and by grade in **Table 6**. Dropout rates are calculated by dividing the dropout count for each individual racial/ethnic group into each group's total enrollment. For example, in the 2000-2001 academic year, 162,831 White students were enrolled in Arizona's public high schools. Of that number, 10,990 White high school students were reported as dropouts by local school districts, resulting in a 6.7% dropout rate for White high school students.

Table 6
2000-2001 Enrollment Count, Dropout Count, and Dropout Rate
by Race/Ethnicity and Grade

	White				Hispanic		Native American		
Grade/Category	Enrolled	Drops	Rate	Enrolled	Drops	Rate	Enrolled	Drops	Rate
7	43678	802	1.8%	26749	893	3.3%	5564	292	5.2%
8	41234	706	1.7%	24794	922	3.7%	4931	304	6.2%
Total Elementary	84912	1508	1.8%	51543	1815	3.5%	10495	596	5.7%
9	45134	2340	5.2%	29165	4010	13.7%	6459	1115	17.3%
10	41628	2377	5.7%	23679	3021	12.8%	5047	719	14.2%
11	37064	2554	6.9%	17745	2426	13.7%	3617	491	13.6%
12	34531	2485	7.2%	16318	2271	13.9%	3346	367	11.0%
Ungraded Secondary	4474	1234	27.6%	4006	1237	30.9%	644	189	29.3%
Total High School	162831	10990	6.7%	90913	12965	14.3%	19113	2881	15.1%
Total All Grades	247743	12498	5.0%	142456	14780	10.4%	29608	3477	11.7%

Table 6 (Cont'd)

,	African American			Asian			
Grade/Category	Enrolled	Drops	Rate	Enrolled	Drops	Rate	
7	3967	110	2.8%	1568	31	2.0%	
8	3703	118	3.2%	1452	15	1.0%	
Total Elementary	7670	228	3.0%	3020	46	1.5%	
9	4197	449	10.7%	1601	48	3.0%	
10	3661	362	9.9%	1658	60	3.6%	
11	2905	310	10.7%	1446	67	4.6%	
12	2723	324	11.9%	1475	91	6.2%	
Ungraded Secondary	1111	295	26.6%	86	20	23.3%	
Total High School	14597	1740	11.9%	6266	286	4.6%	
Total All Grades	22267	1968	8.8%	9286	332	3.6%	

African American, Hispanic and Native American students continue to drop out at higher rates than White and Asian students. However, **Table 7** shows that these groups of students are those showing the greatest decreases in the dropout rate, thereby reducing the gap between the dropout rates of ethnic groups.

Comparing Race/Ethnicity Dropout Rate to 1999-2000

Table 7 shows a comparison between dropout rates for 2000-2001 and 1999-2000 by ethnicity. According to the data shown here, the dropout rate for Asian students in all grades 7-12 has increased by 0.1%, while all others have decreased from one year ago. The largest decrease is seen in the Native American student population, from 13.2% in 2000 to 11.7% in 2001, a drop of 1.5%.

Table 7
Dopout Rate Comparison Over Last Two Years
by Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Year	Total Elementary	Total High School	Total All Grades
	2000	1.8%	8.1%	5.9%
White	2001	1.8%	6.7%	5.0%
	Difference	0.0%	-1.4%	-0.9%
	2000	4.4%	15.4%	11.3%
Hispanic	2001	3.5%	14.3%	10.4%
	Difference	-0.9%	-1.1%	-0.9%
	2000	6.6%	16.8%	13.2%
Native American	2001	5.7%	15.1%	11.7%
	Difference	-0.9%	-1.7%	-1.5%
	2000	4.1%	13.0%	9.9%
African-American	2001	3.0%	11.9%	8.8%
	Difference	-1.1%	-1.1%	-1.1%
	2000	1.0%	4.8%	3.5%
Asian	2001	1.5%	4.6%	3.6%
	Difference	+0.5%	-0.2%	+0.1%

12

Dropout Rate by Ethnicity and Gender

Table 8 shows a breakdown of the total ethnic enrollment and dropout rates by grade and gender. Consistent with Table 5, male enrollment and dropout rates exceed those of female students in all racial summary categories. Native American and African American ungraded secondary and eighth grade Asian are the only racial/ethnic categories in which females drop out at a higher rate than males. The largest gender differences (2.7% for both) are seen in Native American and African American high school students. Native American males are shown to have a 16.4% dropout rate compared to 13.7% for females in the same ethnic category, and African American high school males show a dropout rate of 13.1% while African American high school females dropped out at a rate of 10.4%.

Table 8
2000-2001 Enrollment Count and Dropout Rate
by Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Grade

						Native		African			
Grade/Category	Gender	White	Rate	Hispanic	Rate	American	Rate	American	Rate	Asian	Rate
7	Male	22441	1.9%	13646	3.4%	2852	5.6%	2057	2.9%	817	2.0%
	Female	21237	1.7%	13103	3.2%	2712	4.8%	1910	2.7%	751	2.0%
8	Male	21183	1.9%	12762	3.7%	2455	6.9%	1944	3.4%	732	0.8%
	Female	20051	1.5%	12032	3.7%	2476	5.4%	1759	3.0%	720	1.3%
Total	Male	43624	1.9%	26408	3.6%	5307	6.2%	4001	3.1%	1549	1.4%
Elementary	Female	41288	1.6%	25135	3.5%	5188	5.1%	3669	2.8%	1471	1.6%
9	Male	23458	5.7%	15118	14.6%	3333	19.3%	2233	11.4%	788	2.2%
	Female	21676	4.6%	14047	12.8%	3126	15.1%	1964	9.9%	813	3.8%
10	Male	21531	6.5%	12307	13.8%	2511	15.3%	1926	10.8%	845	4.0%
	Female	20097	4.9%	11372	11.7%	2536	13.2%	1735	8.9%	813	3.2%
11	Male	18643	7.7%	9092	14.8%	1804	13.7%	1475	11.8%	722	6.1%
	Female	18421	6.1%	8653	12.5%	1813	13.4%	1430	9.5%	724	3.2%
12	Male	17759	8.6%	8480	15.4%	1638	12.3%	1466	13.2%	753	6.9%
	Female	16772	5.7%	7838	12.4%	1708	9.7%	1257	10.3%	722	5.4%
Ungraded Secondar	^y Male	3042	26.0%	2875	28.7%	398	28.9%	921	24.2%	59	25.4%
	Female	1432	31.0%	1131	36.3%	246	30.1%	190	37.9%	27	18.5%
Total High	Male	84433	7.7%	47872	15.4%	9684	16.4%	8021	13.1%	3167	5.1%
School	Female	78398	5.8%	43041	13.0%	9429	13.7%	6576	10.4%	3099	4.0%
Total All	Male	128057	5.7%	74280	11.2%	14991	12.8%	12022	9.8%	4716	3.9%
Grades	Female	119686	4.3%	68176	9.5%	14617	10.6%	10245	7.7%	4570	3.2%

Dropout Rate by County

School district data were aggregated to calculate enrollment counts, dropout counts, and dropout/status unknown rates by county and grade. **Table 9** provides dropout and status unknown rates by county, state and an overall dropout rate for the students in state juvenile corrections facilities. The Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections (ADJC) operates juvenile correctional facilities and serves as a school district for incarcerated students.

Table 9 2000-2001 Dropout Rate by County

	Students	Number of	Grades 7-8	Grades 9-12	Overall
County	Enrolled	Dropouts	Dropout Rate	Dropout Rate	Dropout Rate
Apache	5767	287	3.5%	5.9%	5.0%
Cochise	11421	932	2.2%	11.0%	8.2%
Coconino	11768	1006	3.7%	10.9%	8.5%
Gila	4730	471	5.9%	12.3%	10.0%
Graham	3133	206	4.1%	7.9%	6.6%
Greenlee	1033	40	0.3%	5.7%	3.9%
La Paz	1593	139	1.2%	12.4%	8.7%
Maricopa	268877	17974	2.5%	9.0%	6.7%
Mohave	12437	1067	2.6%	11.9%	8.6%
Navajo	12443	1005	3.0%	10.5%	8.1%
Pima	68566	5471	2.2%	11.0%	8.0%
Pinal	13451	1207	5.2%	11.3%	9.0%
Santa Cruz	4840	371	2.7%	10.0%	7.7%
Yavapai	12574	1018	2.8%	11.1%	8.1%
Yuma	15078	1082	2.8%	9.6%	7.2%
ADJC	3649	779	n/a	21.3%	21.3%
Arizona	451360	33055	2.7%	9.8%	7.3%